Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented). A stable liquid calibrator or control for use in a ligand binding assay for measuring a level of a natriuretic peptide in a test sample, wherein said calibrator or control comprises at least one human synthetic natriuretic peptide, has a pH of from about 4.0 to about 6.5, and remains stable when stored at temperatures of from about 2 to about 8°C for a period of about twelve (12) months.

2. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 1, wherein said calibrator or control has a pH of from about 5.0 to about 6.0.

3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 1, wherein said human synthetic natriuretic peptide is selected from the group consisting of human synthetic atrial natriuretic peptide, human synthetic B-type natriuretic peptide, human synthetic C-type natriuretic peptide [[or]] and human synthetic *Dendroaspsis* natriuretic peptide.

5. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 1, wherein said calibrator or control comprises at least one buffer, at least one acid, at least one base, or combinations thereof.

6. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 5, wherein said buffer is selected from the group consisting of an acetate buffer, a citrate buffer, a phosphate buffer [[or]] and combinations thereof.

7. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 5, wherein said acid is selected from the group consisting of acetic acid, citric acid, diethylenetriaminepentaacetic acid, hydrochloric acid [[or]] and combinations thereof.

8. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 5, wherein the base is sodium hydroxide.

9. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 1, wherein said calibrator or control comprises at least one diluent.

10. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 9, wherein said diluent comprises at least one natriuretic stabilizing compound and at least one biocide.

11. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 10, wherein said natriuretic stabilizing compound is a protein or a polymer.

12. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 11, wherein the protein is selected from the group consisting of bovine serum albumin, bovine gamma globulin, [[or]] and a non-fat dry milk.

13. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 11, wherein the polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyethylene glycol, dextran, dextran sulfate [[or]] and polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

14. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 9, wherein the diluent further comprises at least one buffer, at least one acid, at least one base, or combinations thereof.

15. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 14, wherein said buffer is selected from the group consisting of an acetate buffer, a citrate buffer, a phosphate buffer [[or]] and combinations thereof.

16. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 14, wherein said acid is selected from the group consisting of acetic acid, citric acid, diethylenetriaminepentaacetic acid, hydrochloric acid [[or]] and combinations thereof.

17. (Original). The calibrator or control or claim 14, wherein the base is sodium hydroxide.

18. (Canceled).

19. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 1, wherein said calibrator or control can be used in an assay at ambient temperature or at a temperature of from about 30 to about 40 °C.

20. (Previously Presented). A stable liquid calibrator or control for use in a ligand binding assay for measuring a level of natriuretic peptide in a test sample, wherein said calibrator or control comprises:

at least one diluent; and

at least one human synthetic natriuretic peptide,

wherein said calibrator or control has a pH of from about 4.0 to about 6.5, and

wherein the calibrator or control remains stable when stored at temperatures of from about 2 to about 8°C for a period of about twelve (12) months.

21. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 20, wherein said calibrator or control has a pH of from about 5.0 to about 6.0.

22. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 20, wherein said human synthetic natriuretic peptide is selected from the group consisting of human synthetic atrial natriuretic peptide, human synthetic B-type natriuretic peptide, human synthetic C-type natriuretic peptide [[or]] and human synthetic *Dendroaspsis* natriuretic peptide.

23. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 20, wherein said calibrator or control comprises at least one buffer, at least one acid, at least one base, or combinations thereof.

24. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 23, wherein said buffer is selected from the group consisting of an acetate buffer, a citrate buffer, a phosphate buffer [[or]] and combinations thereof.

25. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 23, wherein said acid is selected from the group consisting of acetic acid, citric acid, diethylenetriaminepentaacetic acid, hydrochloric acid [[or]] and combinations thereof.

26. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 23, wherein the base is sodium hydroxide.

27. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 20, wherein said diluent comprises at least one natriuretic stabilizing compound and at least one biocide.

28. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 27, wherein said natriuretic stabilizing compound is a protein or a polymer.

29. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 28, wherein the protein is selected from the group consisting of bovine serum albumin, bovine gamma globulin, [[or]] and a non-fat dry milk.

30. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 28, wherein the polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyethylene glycol, dextran, dextran sulfate [[or]] and polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

31. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 27, wherein the diluent further comprises at least one buffer, at least one acid, at least one base, or combinations thereof.

32. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 31, wherein said buffer is selected from the group consisting of an acetate buffer, a citrate buffer, a phosphate buffer [[or]] and combinations thereof.

33. (Currently Amended). The calibrator or control of claim 31, wherein said acid is selected from the group consisting of acetic acid, citric acid, diethylenetriaminepentaacetic acid, hydrochloric acid [[or]] and combinations thereof.

34. (Original). The calibrator or control or claim 31, wherein the base is sodium hydroxide.

35. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 20, wherein said calibrator or control can be stored at a temperature of from about 2 to about 8 °C.

36. (Original). The calibrator or control of claim 20, wherein said calibrator or control can be used in an assay at ambient temperature or at a temperature of from about 30 to about 40 °C.

37. – 51 (Canceled).

52. (Currently Amended). A stable liquid calibrator or control for use in a ligand binding assay for measuring a level of a natriuretic peptide in a test sample, wherein said calibrator or control comprises at least one human synthetic natriuretic peptide, has a pH of from about 4.0 to about 6.5~~, is not reconstituted from a lyophilisate,~~ and is reusable.

53. (Canceled).